

I. THE NARRATIVE ESSAY

The purpose of this kind of essay is to relate logically and systematically a series of events, real or imaginary. The facts should, so far as possible, be presented in an order of sequence. To make your essay interesting introduce

1. Suspense, if you are relating a story.
2. Dramatic interest, if you are dealing with a personality.
3. Historical parallels, if you are narrating historical events.

Personal comments, if any, should be avoided during the narration, and may be made in the conclusion.

Narrative

Suggested outline for an Historical Event:

1. Introduction. Date. Place. People.
2. Circumstances. Incidents.
3. Outcome.
4. Comments, Observations and Conclusions.

II. THE DESCRIPTIVE ESSAY

The purpose of a descriptive essay is to present a picture which may be either an accurate one like a photograph or an imaginative one like a

painting. There should be an appeal to the senses, e.g. of sight, sound, touch, taste. Personal comments used effectively will help to make the essay lively and interesting.

Descriptive

Suggested outline for the description of a town:

1. Introduction. General Impression.
2. History.
3. Buildings and monuments of special importance.
4. Special features.
5. Concluding remarks.

III. THE REFLECTIVE ESSAY

The purpose of a reflective essay is mainly to give your opinions on a particular subject. Since the topics in this type are usually abstract, the temptation may be to make the essay into a sermon, and moralize a little too much. For obvious reasons, the personal element has a big role in this type. Originality and forceful thinking matter a great deal in a reflective essay. Do not confuse between facts and opinions, and in order that your argument may appear sound and convincing, you have to be logical and relevant. A less abstract form of the reflective essay is the

expository essay in which one is called upon to explain or expound something. The topics dealt with in such essays are mostly general and abstract in nature, but the treatment is less abstract than in a reflective essay proper.

Reflective and Expository

Suggested outline for

(a) 'Punctuality':

1. Introduction. Definition or explanation.
2. Development of theme.
3. Value.
4. Effects of punctuality and of a lack of it.
5. Concluding remarks.

(b) 'The Cinema':

1. Introduction.
2. Brief history.
3. Its educative value.
4. Evil effects, if any.
5. Summing up.

IV. THE TOPICAL ESSAY

Essays in this class usually deal with current political, social and economic problems, both national and international.

A certain amount of general knowledge and awareness are necessary to deal with such subjects.

It is not always necessary, however, to go into the history of the problem. The facts must initially be stated correctly and as objectively as possible, though to make your essay original and appealing, you must have a point of view which you should be able to present convincingly. This does not, by any means, imply a narrow and partisan attitude. The stand taken should, so far as possible, be rational and tolerant.

Topical

Suggested outline for 'Planning':

1. Introduction. Definition. Explanation.
2. Brief history.
3. Need for it in the present socio-political set-up.
4. Benefits of planning.
5. Reference to its working in India and some other countries.
6. Conclusion.

SUGGESTED TOPICS UNDER CLASSIFIED HEADINGS

Narrative

1. A ghost story.
2. The career of a king or queen in Indian history.
3. My first interview for a job.
4. An account of a walking or a cycling tour.

5. The adventures of a new car-owner.
6. How I spent my last summer vacation.
7. Three great scientists.

Descriptive

1. An election.
2. Annual athletic sports in your College.
3. The most unpleasant man I have met.
4. The book I have enjoyed reading most.
5. Indian beggars.
6. A true friend.

Reflective and Expository

(A) Reflective

1. The dangerous philosophy of contentment.
2. Hate the sin, not the sinner.
3. Knowledge is power.
4. Superstition.
5. What Life means to me.
6. 'Peace hath her victories no less renowned than war'.
7. 'Manners maketh Man'.
8. India of my dreams.

(B) Expository

1. The scientific approach to life.
2. Woman's place is in the home.
3. Is novel-reading a waste of time?
4. Examinations are a necessary evil.
5. Business advertising.

6. Student indiscipline.
7. The unity and diversity of India.
8. Commerce and communications.

Topical

1. Emotional integration of India.
2. Space travel.
3. India and her neighbours.
4. The problem of peace in the nuclear age.
5. Science and modern warfare.
6. Planning in the modern state.
7. The language problem in India.
8. The policy of non-alignment.
9. Modern Indian films.

A NOTE ON FORMAL PHRASES IN ENGLISH LETTER-WRITING

In English, as in most languages, certain phrases are used in formal communication which have come to have a meaning which is not apparent in the words themselves. These formal or conventional phrases are especially important when you are writing letters in which you are asking someone to do something for you. If you use the wrong phrases, you may offend a superior, or fail to give a subordinate the necessary sense of urgency.

Two things have to be borne in mind when choosing the correct formal phrase:

1. Is the person you are writing to superior, equal or inferior to you?
2. Is the thing you are asking him to do something which you have a right to ask of him, or something which he will only do as a favour?

Some important phrases:

1. *I should be most grateful if you would be so kind as to . . .*

This is the most formal and respectful phrase that you are likely to need. It is used when the person you are writing to is very much superior to you, and you are asking him to do something which you have no right to expect him to do. You would use this if, for example, you were asking for non-attendance to be condoned when you have a very poor excuse, or when you are asking someone of very great importance to attend a function of a rather small society.

2. To lessen the extreme respect of No. 1, you may leave out 'most', or substitute 'glad' for 'grateful', or substitute 'if you would be kind enough to' for 'if you would be so kind as to'. By making all three changes, we get:

3. *I should be glad if you would be kind enough to...*

This would be used for a respectful request for something which you have a right to expect—such as a certificate from the University authorities, a form from a Government Department and so on.

4. *I shall be glad if you will...*

This is a polite instruction to an equal or inferior to give you something to which you have a right—simple requests for forms, or orders to shops, firms or banks will be in this style. You would be likely to use this style if you know somebody on the staff of the shop, etc., or if you normally do business with them or if they are particularly large or important firms. Most requests to banks for something in the normal course of their business would be in this form.

5. *Please send me...*

This is normal for small routine orders to shops or firms or government offices—i.e. where the order is likely to be handled by a clerk rather than by the manager. It would also be used for very simple instructions to a bank (e.g. asking for a new cheque book or a statement of account). It might also be used to a University office for some very small matter. It would also be the normal form used to a library, for example asking for a book to be reserved for you (in which case it would be 'please reserve the following book for me...').

6. *Please be so kind as to... or Please be kind enough to...*

'Good' may be substituted for 'kind'. These forms would only be used to inferiors (e.g. from a University lecturer to the clerk of the Department), and convey a definite instruction. These forms are in fact polite orders, and should only be used to people to whom you are entitled to give orders.

7. *Kindly*...

The word 'Kindly' is, interestingly, only used for very sharp and peremptory orders. It is typically used for demanding payment on bills that are badly overdue, or for rectifying the fault of a subordinate. You should never use it unless you are willing for the recipient to feel insulted.

It is important to remember that Nos 4, 5, 6 and 7 should never be used to superiors, and Nos 6 and 7 should not be used to equals unless you wish to be insulting. For superiors, forms I—3 should always be used. If the request is felt to be too small for the full formula, 'be so kind as to...' or 'be kind enough to...' may be left out, though for people very much your superior the full formula should always be used.

It is always better to use a rather more respectful formula than absolutely necessary than to be thought lacking in respect, so that if you are in doubt about what to use, choose the more respectful. It is better to be thought too polite than not polite enough.

At the end of a letter to a superior, it is not polite to ask for a quick reply, unless you do it with one of the respectful formulae shown above. It is, for example, perfectly polite to end your letter, asking an important person to attend a meeting with, 'I should be most grateful if you would be so kind as to let me have your answer before the 20th December', but it would not be polite to end with some such phrase as: 'Thanking you in anticipation of your prompt reply'. This would show you to be either ignorant or bad-mannered.

It should be remembered that the formulae containing the words 'thanking you' ('thanking you' alone; 'thanking you in anticipation'; 'thanking you for your esteemed order' and so on) are used only in business correspondence. When using these formulae, you will normally be expected to say that you are thanking your addressee for—an order, the delivery of goods, documents, a service or something of the

sort. 'Thanking you' by itself is rather peremptory and sharp and is normally only used for demanding the payment of overdue bills, the delivery of overdue goods etc. In any case, if you have phrased your request correctly and politely, it is quite unnecessary to thank the addressee, until he has done what you asked him to do, since you will have included in your request the fact that you will be grateful if he does what you are asking him to do. The best letter-writing style is to be polite but simple, and not to say a thing twice when you have already said it once.

'I remain' before 'Yours truly', 'Yours faithfully' or 'Yours sincerely' is nowadays rather old-fashioned. It is often used in formal letters from a Government Department or from old-established and superior firms. It is best not to use this form in practice, but you should remember that you may find yourself in an office where it is the custom. In that case you should follow the custom of the office.

The following points should be remembered about the phrase immediately before the signature:

1. 'Yours truly' is never used to a superior. It may be used to shops, firms or banks (especially on minor matters). It should never be used to a senior member of a University or College, or to the Principal of a school.
2. 'Yours faithfully' may be used to anyone, provided you have not used your addressee's name at the beginning of the letter.
3. 'Yours sincerely' must always be used when you have used your addressee's name at the beginning of the letter. As a general rule, if you know the name of the person you are writing to, it is more polite to use his or her name, and then of course to end 'Yours sincerely'. The only exception to this is when you are writing a very formal letter to someone definitely senior to you. For example, if you are requesting

the head of your Department to be the chairman of a meeting, you would address him as 'Dear Professor Joshi', but if you were sending a formal request to forward an application for remission of fees, you would address him as 'Dear Sir', and end, of course, 'Yours faithfully'.

The question of whether you should address someone by name or not is a difficult one. Two questions need to be answered before you can decide:

(a) How well do I know him?

(b) How formal is the business I am writing to him about?

At the two extremes, the decision is easy. If you hardly know him and the business is very formal, you start 'Dear Sir', and end 'Yours faithfully'. If you know him very well and the business of your letter is not formal, you start 'Dear Professor Joshi' and end 'Yours sincerely'. However, you may find yourself in a situation where the position is not as clear as this. In such a case, it is perfectly correct to ask the advice of someone senior to you. If you know the Head of your Department very well but you think that a particular letter is very formal, it would be quite correct to ask him how he would like you to address him in that particular letter.

A further point that should be remembered in connexion with the writing of letters is that many offices or businesses have their own special formulae. There was once the head of an important business in England who insisted that all letters from his firm should end 'Yours faithfully' even where the name of the addressee was used at the beginning of the letter. He said, 'You should always be faithful in business, but you can never be entirely sincere.'

This section on letter-writing is therefore a general guide to the forms most commonly used, and which are always correct for your private affairs. On the other hand, you may find yourself in a situation where different forms are used

as part of the routine of a Government Department or business firm, and you ^{by} ~~used~~ if you are writing business letters on someone else's ^{behalf}, always find out as soon as possible what forms are used in that office.

Similarly, you may often find that other people do not use the same forms as you do. This may be due to ignorance, or to the fact that they are thoroughly acquainted with the language and use them for special purposes. In either case, do not copy them unless you know exactly what you are doing.

A NOTE ON THE PRONUNCIATION OF ENGLISH

According to the 1961 Census of India, English is spoken by more than eleven million Indians. This means that India is the fourth largest English-speaking country in the world. Since there are thirty-one countries which use English as an official language, this makes India of major importance in the English-speaking world.

Each country where English is used has its own 'accent'—that is, its own characteristic method of pronunciation. In fact, in countries with a large English-speaking population, there are many different accents, as in the United States, Britain, Canada and Australia and so on. In each country, however, there is a 'received' or 'approved' accent which is the one normally used for business, administration, in the legislature, on the radio or for academic work. These accents are called 'received' because they are most widely understood by people, even by people who speak their own accents; they are called 'approved' because they are often spoken of as being 'correct' or 'good' accents. It is important to realize that there is nothing morally good or bad about speaking

with a particular accent (though some ignorant people talk as if there were). It is only that a 'good' accent is one that can be easily understood by the people of your community.

It is important also to realize that the received pronunciations of the different countries are usually different from each other—the accent of announcers of the BBC is different from the Voice of America or Radio Australia. Since India is one of the major English-speaking countries, there is therefore no reason to be ashamed of speaking with an Indian accent.

On the other hand, this does not mean that there is no point in learning the pronunciation of English. The whole purpose of learning English is to be able to communicate with other English-speaking people, whether Indian or foreign. If everybody speaks English in his own way, with his own accent, it becomes difficult for people to understand each other and the great use of English as an international language is lost. Today, many Indians go to work in West Africa, especially in Ghana and Nigeria, in the Railways and education and so on. They often find it difficult to make themselves understood because the accent of English in West Africa is very different from that in India. Even in India there are regional differences of pronunciation—a man from Madras, Calcutta, Bombay or Lucknow will each have his own way of pronouncing English, and it is not desirable for these regional accents to grow so far apart from each other that the people who speak them cannot understand each other easily.

One of the great difficulties of learning English pronunciation is that the spelling of English is not phonetic. In Hindi written in the Devanagari script you can usually tell how a word is pronounced by reading out the sound of each letter or combination of letters in turn, but in the conventional spelling of English this is not so possible. There are two reasons for this:

(a) English spelling gives information about the origin and history of a word—its relation to other words, the language it was taken from, etc.

(b) Owing to the large number of different accents and their importance, there is no single pronunciation of most English words that the spelling could represent. It is bad enough that the Americans, English, Scots, Irish, Australians and so on pronounce the language differently. If they all spelt differently to match their own accents, there would be an end to the unity of the English language which is its great advantage in the world. It is better to keep a conventional spelling which does not represent any one accent than to have a large number of different spelling systems. The American spelling of English is slightly different, but it still keeps a large number of conventional features which makes it perfectly easy for other English-speaking people to read.

Since it is not possible to be certain what the pronunciation of a word is by looking at its spelling, it is necessary for the foreign learner to find out the pronunciation of any new word that he meets. This means that for the learner of English the first need is for a good pronouncing dictionary. There are many dictionaries which give the pronunciation of English words, but the best of them for the purpose of a foreign learner is

The Advanced Learner's Dictionary, by Hornby, Gatenby and Wakefield, published by the Oxford University Press.

This is specially designed to give the sort of information required by a foreign learner of English. The Oxford Dictionaries are more designed for native speakers of English, and they show pronunciation in a rather difficult manner.

When learning to pronounce English, four different kinds of sound need to be controlled. Conscious control is neces-

sary when learning, since no two languages are pronounced in the same way, and you cannot learn to speak a new language unless you practise at it—just as you cannot learn to ride a bicycle unless you practise. If you want to be able to pronounce English in a way which will be easily understood by other speakers of English, practice is essential. Find out exactly what you need to do, and do it over and over again until you get it right.

The four kinds of sound which need to be learnt to pronounce English are:

1. The individual articulations or placing of the tongue and lips, usually known as *phonemes*;
2. Combinations of individual sounds or phonemes, especially those which are strange and difficult;
3. The distinction between stressed and unstressed syllables;
4. The intonation or movement of the voice up and down which carries the emotional meaning of a sentence.

1. *The Phonemes*

The important thing about the phonemes is not so much that they should be pronounced exactly as native English speakers pronounce them—in any case, different native speakers of English pronounce them differently—but that they should be pronounced differently from each other.

Most of the consonant phonemes of English can be pronounced in exactly the same way as in Hindi. We shall deal here only with those which are either slightly different from Hindi phonemes, or which do not occur in Hindi.

The sounds *θ* and *ð*, as in 'thin' and 'then' are very similar to the Hindi sounds *थ* and *द*. The difference is that the Hindi sounds are stops (that is, while you are actually making the sound the air is stopped from coming out of the mouth)

whereas in English, they are fricatives, and the air is blown out between the teeth. In actual fact, the Hindi sounds will do quite well for the English sounds, since they cannot be confused with any other English sounds. If you want to get very close to a native English pronunciation, practise making the Hindi sounds, but hold the tongue more gently against the teeth so that the air can be blown out between the front teeth.

The Hindi sound व is half-way between the English sounds v and w. For w, the lips are well rounded, and the lower lip is quite clear of the teeth. For practical purposes, the Hindi व may be used for the English v, though if you want to get near to the native English pronunciation, you should practise making the sound with your lower lip resting lightly on the upper teeth and the upper lip drawn right back so that the upper teeth can be seen from in front (it is useful in learning the pronunciation of strange phonemes to practise in front of a looking-glass so that you can see what you are doing).

The English sounds t and d are made with the tongue further forward than the Hindi ट and ड, but again for practical purposes the Hindi sounds are near enough. If you want to get very close to the native pronunciation, pronounce them with the tongue right up on the ridge behind the teeth—that is, half-way between Hindi ट, ड and त, द.

The English ʃ (usually spelt sh) is the same as the Hindi श, but it must be remembered that many speakers of Hindi pronounce श and स in the same way. The ʃ sound is further back than स (स), and in fact is sounded with the tongue in almost exactly the same place as the Hindi ट or ड. The English स and Hindi स are sounded with the tongue in the same place as the English t and d. The sounds स and ʃ are fricatives—that is, the air is not stopped, but is blown out of the mouth while they are pronounced. They are also said to be 'voiceless', which means that, if you put your fingers in